

Storefronts in Washington are typically one story in height on a building's first floor and are framed by the existing structure of a larger building. A storefront is composed of a series of components that work in unison. Those components are: Window Base, Doors, Windows (display and transom), Frieze or Sign Band, Commercial Signage, Awnings or Canopies, Colors, Lighting, and Security Systems.

Each of these components will be discussed in detail in the following sections.

Improving the visual appeal of a storefront can often be accomplished with minor improvements and by removing elements that have been inappropriately added over the years. In some cases, however, renovation may require more extensive work due to lack of proper maintenance. In either case, an attractive visual presentation is desirable to draw customers to the establishment.



EXAMPLES OF GOOD STOREFRONT COMPOSITIONS: ELLINGTON'S ON EIGHTH (CAPITOL HILL) AND CHIPOTLE MEXICAN GRILL (WOODLEY PARK)

## ENCOURAGED

- Installing storefronts that complement the existing structural frame of the building.
- Repairing, restoring and upgrading storefront materials.
- Changing the pattern and/or texture of storefront materials.
- Repainting and repairing brick or other masonry units.
- Removing old paint from masonry facades using non-toxic, biodegradable processes.

## STRONGLY DISCOURAGED

- Installation of historically inaccurate or incompatible façade or material treatments such as imitation brick or stone.
- Removing existing materials that contribute to the original architectural character of the building.
- Painting unpainted masonry, especially in historic districts or on historic landmarks.
- Using restoration materials that do not closely match (color, size, texture, pattern, quality, etc.) materials of the existing building (i.e. caulk replacing cement mortar.)
- Reducing the size of pedestrian travel paths on sidewalks.
- Covering, altering or damaging architectural elements of the façade with signs, awnings, or other additive elements.
- Sandblasting or using harsh chemicals to clean brick or other masonry.

# storefront components

Understanding the components of a building façade will assist you in communicating with designers about storefront renovations. Creatively accentuating each part of a storefront can contribute to making a distinctive image for your business. It is possible to create a distinctive storefront while working with

renovations. Just as you have considered how to grow your business over a period of time, you should have a storefront design strategy that will add value to your business before making piecemeal alterations.

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some of the architectural elements of the building that are consistent (i.e. window base, trim/frieze, etc.) Being distinctive does not necessarily translate into using costly materials to enhance your storefront. In most cases, alternative materials that have the same function and visual effect as expensive components are available at lower cost. Basic maintenance and upkeep should be a priority for any

## Window Base

Most storefronts use a window base to lift display windows to a more visible level for passersby while protecting display windows from damage and weathering. Window bases are typically made of sturdy, easy-to-maintain materials to counter potential wear and tear. Typical materials include brick, concrete, hardwoods, metal panels, ceramic tiles, and other masonry materials.

## ENCOURAGED

- Restoring and/or repairing original, still-in-place window bases.
- Using sturdy, easy-to-maintain window base materials to provide a new and appropriate storefront window base(s). (Sturdy materials include brick, concrete, hardwoods, metal panels, ceramic tiles, and other masonry materials.)
- Maintaining or designing window bases for multiple storefronts in a building such that the height (not elevation) of the bases is consistent and the bases are of the same material.
- Installing window bases no higher than two (2) feet (24 inches) from the ground.

## STRONGLY DISCOURAGED

- Eliminating a window base that was a part of the original building or that was also used to conceal any portion of a business' mechanical systems.
- Varying window base heights within a storefront or building.
- Using non-durable materials, like low-grade plywood, which are not easy to maintain.

## MATERIALS FOR BASES



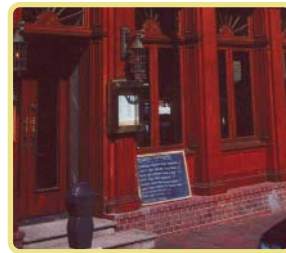
METAL



WOOD



CONCRETE



BRICK



MARBLE



PAINTED WOOD